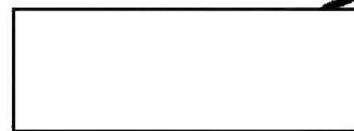


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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

Memorandum



Indications of an Impending
Political Decision of
Significance in Cuba

23 December 1962

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23 December 1962

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

MEMORANDUM: Indications of an Impending Political Decision of Significance in Cuba

1. There are scattered signs that an important political step may now be under consideration by Premier Castro and other important Cuban leaders. There are no indications that such a decision is necessitated by an internal threat, such as was the case during the period preceding the expulsion of Anibal Escalante last March. On the other hand, there is every reason to believe that it is connected with what Castro and his closest advisers regard as the humiliation of Cuba by the recent Soviet failure to consult with the Castro regime before withdrawing its offensive weapons from Cuba. It is possible that the first of the year will provide some dramatic fireworks. At this moment we can estimate neither the odds favoring such an event nor its probable nature.

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3.

the unusual "political doldrums" in the Cuban capital were reminiscent of the period immediately preceding Escalante's ouster.

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now, as then, Fidel Castro has shunned publicity and has been absent from nearly all public functions for several weeks, and there is the same impression that the regime lacks direction and leadership.

[redacted] as improbable as it may appear, there may be some young Cubans who would discard both Moscow and Peiping in favor of trying to "stand alone rather than suffer further affront" to Cuban national pride. The key to the situation is Castro, who [redacted] is "looking for something dramatic to replace his lost dream to be a second Simon Bolivar," but there are no indications as to what shape it might take.

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4. Developments

[redacted] have tended to heighten the mystery and reinforce speculation that some sort of political change is in the offing. Castro has continued his silence, even failing to appear at a 19 December sugar workers' rally in Havana, at which he had been widely advertised for weeks as the featured speaker. Minister of Industries Guevara appeared for him at the last minute while Fidel paid a visit, as he has done quite frequently in the last two months, to the University of Havana. It is here that he was rumored to have sought solace on several occasions during Mikoyan's visit, and it is here that he has been said to have made his bitterest denunciations of Soviet "treachery." We have no reliable accounts of any of his conversations with students here during this period, but his repeated visits among these young people--believed to still provide his strongest internal ideological support--are significant in themselves. The French press agency reports that these students have demanded the resignation of the university rector, veteran old Communist Juan Marinello, on the grounds that he supported Soviet rather than Cuban interests during the recent crisis. This could well reflect Castro's own views, although the report has not yet been confirmed.

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5. Another development may indicate that Castro is considering some alteration in Cuba's generally pro-Soviet alignment in the Sino-Soviet dispute. The Havana daily Revolucion printed and gave a prominent place in its 17 December edition to a verbatim translation of the most scathingly anti-Khrushchev editorial yet published in the Chinese Communist party organ, the People's Daily. The three major Cuban newspapers have usually bent over backward to stay out of the Sino-Soviet dispute; the circumstances under which this article was

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